PREMIUM Garbage

by

Timothy Jason Rickett

July, 2019

Director of Thesis: Hanna Jubran

Major Department: School of Art and Design

Each year the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) releases the Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures Sheet. Within this document, the EPA records Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generation, recycling, composting, combustion with energy recovery and landfilling. According to this document, the average American produces approximately 4.4 pounds of trash every day, substantially greater than the global average of 2.6 pounds. The population of the United States is nearly 324 million people, that amounts to over 700,000 tons of garbage produced daily, enough to fill around 60,000 garbage trucks. The United States contributes the most amount of waste in the world, but this is not a one nation problem. In 2012 the world generated 2.6 trillion pounds of garbage, the weight of about 7,000 Empire State Buildings.

This document provides written support for the thesis exhibition, PREMIUM Garbage. The body of work that was produced for the thesis exhibition provides a visual representation of human waste culture, including the harmful production of the wasteful products like single-use plastics and other disposable materials. The work utilizes these materials as visual elements in the exhibition, artistically representing our waste culture predicament. The work is expressing developing ideas regarding personal understandings of our massive waste problem and the Anthropocene. PREMIUM Garbage is intended to share the harsh reality of human waste culture as well as educate and inform an audience about the problem that has become our most significant legacy: our trash.

PREMIUM Garbage

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Art and Design

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MFA in Art

by

Timothy Jason Rickett

July, 2019

PREMIUM Garbage

by

Timothy Jason Rickett

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS:

_____

Hanna Jubran, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

_____

Linda Adele Goodine, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

_____

Lisa Beth Robinson, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

_____

Gerald Weckesser, MFA

DIRECTOR OF THE
SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN:

_____

Kate Bukoski, PhD

DEAN OF GRADUATE SCHOOL:

_____

Paul J Gemperline, PhD

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this document to Tom Kreager. Without him I would not be where I am today. He was my biggest supporter, mentor, and friend. From the first day we met, he pushed me to further my education in graduate school and I knew I wanted follow in his footsteps and fell in love with glass blowing and sculpture under his guidance. Thank you for everything Tom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is steadily destroying the planet with a massive waste culture problem due to the modern industrial society, and in our ever-increasing desire to commodify and advance our new convenience-first lifestyles, people have found a way to destroy and pollute the environment which sustains us but barely tolerates us. To comply with a rapidly growing population that relies on convenience, humanity created and mass-produced products that would fit this lifestyle. This is when the invention of plastics and other single-use polystyrene products came into being. Plastic bottles were first used commercially in 1947 but remained relatively expensive until the early 1950s when high-density polyethylene was introduced.[i] In theory, plastics seemed like a perfect solution; they are cheap to produce, can hold their shape and are extraordinarily durable. These ideal specifications of the products also contribute to a massive problem that has been spiraling out of control with no permanent solution in sight. There are attempts like recycling, landfills, biodegradable products, and bans on certain materials that have taken off within the last decade. Ultimately there needs to be a change in the attitude of those who participate willingly or unknowingly in the system which perpetuates the production and desire of the products.

For most societies around the world, people tend to throw their plastic, single-use products like cutlery, straws, and containers, straight into the garbage. Kevin Sieff, a writer for The Washington Post states that the world's garbage is predicted to grow exponentially in the coming decades as people become richer and increasingly move to urban areas; "By 2025, the waste produced by cities around the globe will be enough to fill a line of rubbish trucks 3,100 miles long every day."[ii] This fact should be highlighted to the users of single-use products.

Plate 1 EPA Logo
https://www.wgvunews.org/post/epa-orders-flint-outline-fixes-water-switch-0

The EPA was created in the wake of critical concern about environmental pollution. Established on December 2, 1970 the EPA's goal was to consolidate federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection. Since its inception through a government agency, the EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.[iii] Today, plastics can be recycled, but not everyone has the ability or the drive to recycle. This fact mixed, with an extremely large, mobile, and selfish population, creates a surplus of the plastics and other convenience items that end up in landfills, where they take hundreds of years to break down. Unfortunately, these products often make their way to the ocean and other natural settings where they affect our vision in the form of visual pollution and destroy the environment and its inhabitants.

Humanity has no singular permanent solution set in place to counter the waste production and consumption problem. There are attempts at minimizing the waste through recycling, composting, reusing products, and using items to cut down on products, like reusable tote bags and water bottles. Recycling is useful, but it is one small contribution to the best solution for zero waste and zero pollution. However, recycling is not often done and throwing away the single-use materials is horrendous normality for many people. The best solution to the world's waste culture problem is to reduce the number of single-use products produced, reuse the contents in any way possible, and refuse to buy any product that is causing these issues. Climate change is the greatest existential crisis facing humanity today. Capitalist

industrialization has led us to the edge of the precipice, and according to John Bellamy Foster, professor of sociology at the University of Oregon and editor of the socialist magazine Monthly Review avoiding the end of civilization as we know it requires the development of a view in direct opposition to the way in which capitalism values nature.[iv] This information helps to understand why our society keeps producing and using wasteful materials even though we know they are destroying our planet. Through my research and making, the study narrows the focal points of the world's current predicament and indicates its basis in capitalism and consumerism in our society.

THE ANTHROPOCENE

The Anthropocene is a recent term which refers to Earth's current geologic and environmental climate. The International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), who define Earth's time scale, believes we are officially in the Holocene ("entirely recent") epoch, which began approximately 11,700 years ago succeeding the last major ice age.[v] However, this label is now outdated. Many experts now argue for the "Anthropocene" from anthropo, for "man," and cene, for "new" because humankind is the cause for mass extinctions of plant and animal species, polluted the oceans and altered the atmosphere, among other lasting impacts.[vi] The Anthropocene defines Earth's most recent geologic period as being human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that humans now alter atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes.

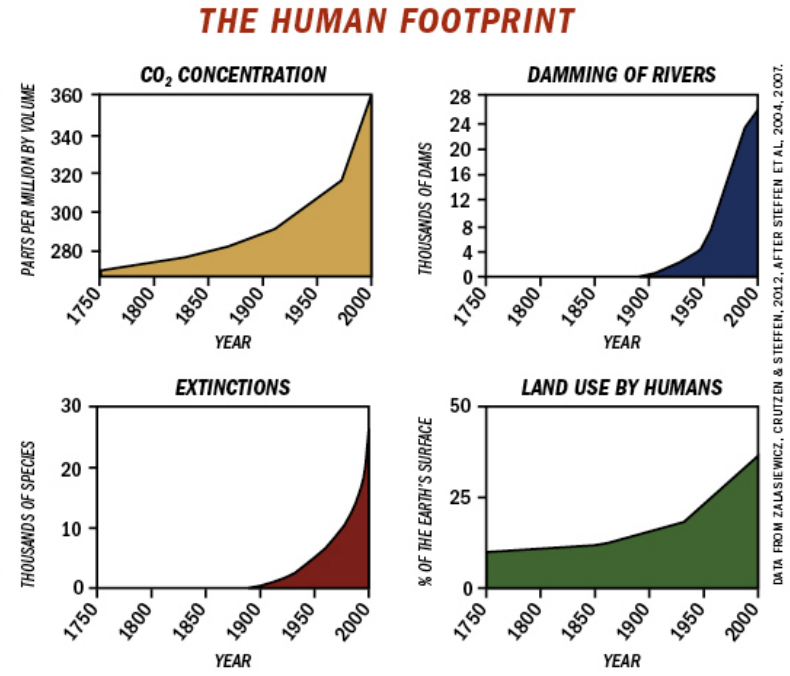

Figure 1 Graph of The Human Footprint Data from Zalasiewicz, Crutzen and Steffen http://inthesetimes.com/article/16544/the_dawning_of_the_age_of_anthropocene

The originator of the Anthropocene terminology, Paul Crutzen, favors the beginning of the Industrial Revolution as the starting point for the Anthropocene. In a 2002 paper in the journal *Nature*, he stated: "The Anthropocene could be said to have started in the late eighteenth century when analyses of air trapped in polar ice showed the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane."[vii] The time table for the start of the Anthropocene is still being argued today. It is safe to say the term itself reflects on any human-influenced presence altering the planet and therefore one could argue that the Anthropocene started nearly 8,000 years ago with the rise of farming and the global spread of human populations in the latter stages of the first Agricultural Revolution. This is also where global significant human alteration of greenhouse gas concentrations and associated climate change, extensive land clearing and soil erosion, and mass species extinctions all began.

The Anthropocene is blatantly tragic. Because of human industry, agriculture practices (agribusiness) and fossil fuel use, carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is now at its highest level for millions of years. At the same time, the disruption of other chemical cycles is turning oceans, seas, and rivers into dead zones.

Climate change is affecting the world around us. Global warming has caused and will continue to cause more glaciers to melt, sea levels to rise, species to continue to become extinct and a variety severe weather events such as droughts, floods, and hurricanes to increase. Nearly two hundred years ago, there were less than a billion people on Earth. Today, there are 7.6 billion, and the human population continues to grow.[viii] According to the United Nations, unless we act, there is likely to be 30% more of us by 2050 and 11 billion people by 2100.[ix]

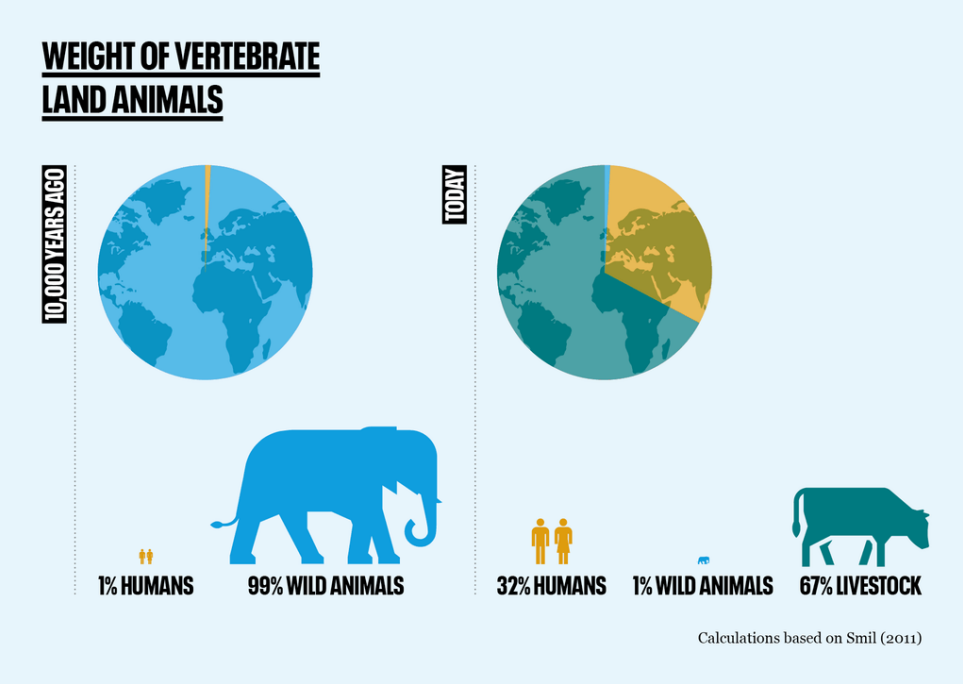

Figure 2 Weight of vertebrate land animals and human
https://overpopulation-project.com/motivation-and-project-objectives/#jp-carousel-424

We all place demands upon our planet; these demands have caused the changes that threaten us and the natural world on which we depend. We have now reached an unprecedented moment in our planet's history. Humans now have changed the Earth and its processes more than all other natural forces combined. Climate change, extinctions, invasive species, technofossils, anthroturbation, terraforming of land, and redirection of water are all part of the indelible human signature.

CATALOGING HUMAN SIGNATURE

PREMIUM Garbage is the visual rendition of the material process in the Anthropocene. The foundation began as an activity of collecting, a personal quest to correct pollution problems. Greenville, North Carolina is a place that has a significant visual waste culture plight, where trash lines the streets and pollutes the waterways. This problem is not unique to Greenville, but this location became the catalyst and where the body of work began. Witnessing this problem, a system for a physical representation began to be a viable solution that would promote change and inform an audience about the disastrous effects of the pollutants on our ecosystem. The trash and recyclables that were collected during my time in Greenville, North Carolina became the materials for PREMIUM Garbage.

Figure 3 Map of Greenville North Carolina
http://locateincarolina.com/maps/state-of-nc-map/

Through conceptual identification, PREMIUM Garbage unfolds the phenomenon of pollution and identifies the human signature. Cataloging the tropes within the Anthropocene created an inventory which condenses the problem of extensive pollution and massive scales of waste into a manageable intimate scale.

The sculptures within PREMIUM Garbage follow the same guidelines to allow for a systematic and realistic approach. The work needed a structural guidance system that would rectify cataloging the

human signature and bring cohesion to creative problem solving. From here an instructional manual was created to help solve the dilemmas of combating voice within the work. The steps within the manual are, collecting the waste product, sorting, and organization of the product, assemblage style of building, and lastly surface treatment. Within all the steps, there is a social aspect, where educational discussions with community occur. The simple steps allowed for a repetitive, but efficient methodology of creating and became an instructional manual for assembling the body of work.

Before the sculptures are made the most crucial step is to collect the cans, bottles, straws, and other unique debris that could potentially fit into the final design. The materials come from a variety of places; including recyclables and single-use products donated by peers and other members of the Greenville, North Carolina community. This act of donation and social comradery became an excellent way for the work to grow and helped seek a solution for change towards the waste culture problem.

There was also the more gratifying process of gathering the materials personally from trash hotspots around Greenville, North Carolina; this most commonly occurred around B's Barbecue Road. and the Greenway next to the Tar River. Picking up the garbage became a type of civil service for the community and was gratifying to participate in this form of activism, which was important as an action for the work. There were many trips and bags of rubbish that had been collected and from this large selection of debris; specific materials like, packaging products, straws, and Christmas ornaments became unique platforms to build on. It was easy to view the products as a dynamic form of functional design, which allowed for creative implementation within the work. Picking up the trash contributed to a visual pollution solution that ultimately was unsuccessful because these areas need constant attention. It became evident that trash clean up on these routes would need to be done daily to keep them free of debris. Anytime trash is collected and disposed of properly, it is a small victory towards correcting the world's pollution problem. A large portion of the materials ended up in recycling bins, while others had to be thrown away due to food oils and non-recyclable packaging. Though this is not a preferred scenario, it was better than the trash sitting on the side of the road or washing away into the Tar River.

Plate 2 Tar River Near Town Common in Greenville, North Carolina

The materials were grouped by similar shapes and substances, including plastics, glass, aluminum cans, packaging materials, and others. The products were stored together for convenience and began to reference different industrial objects that inspired the final forms of the sculptures. For example, straws would become pipes and cans and ornaments would become storage tanks. The different products found refuge in labeled totes and baskets until the building process took place.

SYNTHESIS OF LEGACIES

The ideas of nostalgia and creative practice are embedded within PREMIUM Garbage. Many of the techniques and processes that the body of work reference come from the nostalgic occurrences that can be found within Legos, Assemblage art, Model making, and miniatures. Through the collection of found object and a structural methodology of assemblage the work starts to take shape. The ideas and materials need to be compiled together to create art about the topic. From here the steps in the manual unfold further to synthesize the information that exists in the world about the topic through conceptualization, social engagement and artistic practice. This began through an artistic review of how others have addressed ideas, process, materials, and why PREMIUM Garbage artifacts reference specific styles and motifs.

Gathering and Making

Within the work there are multiple references of personal significance with the processes that helped shape the work. Growing up with a family member who is interested in railroad model making and miniatures, it was easy to be saturated and exposed to the processes that are needed to create intricate details with a variety of media. This mixed with a background in theatre stage design has allowed for a unique perspective to the creative problem solving that comes with the territory of Legos and other similar products that were influences for PREMIUM Garbage. The process now becomes an alternative way of Recycling that assimilates with artistic practice and feelings of nostalgia.

Plate 3 Legos
http://time.com/3931946/lego-sustainable-materials/

The next step in the instructional manual is the process of assembling the products that allowed for an organized chaos studio practice which brought along with it, feelings of nostalgia. The process worked best when building the sculptures in a Lego-like fashion that was reminiscent of child-like play. The materials were in their respective totes and required sifting through the debris to find the right piece. This became more natural and organic as a practice. The trash had some limitations with structural integrity, adhesion of materials, and acceptance of paint. These occurrences required creative problem solving which is where the Lego's became a great resource. The Lego brick helped in preparation for these random occurrences because of its unique type of stick and assemble play. It helped in building the work, maneuvering the limitations of the materials. Through this nostalgic creative outlet, the trash was pieced together, and a variety of industrial shapes and forms began to emerge. The new volumes of the incomplete sculptures add excitement and the final product slowly starts to emerge.

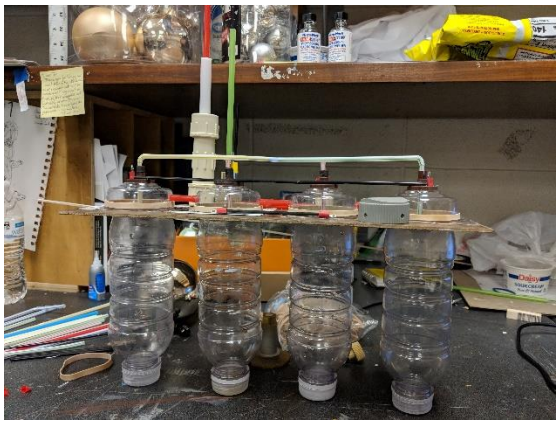

Plate 4 Early Industrial Construction

When referencing the dire circumstances the world is facing, the work requires a more lighthearted approach. The content of the work is critical and consistently addresses issues in the Anthropocene. This complex issue needs creative expression. Utilizing the elements and principles of design through artistic practice and using the same criteria that is embedded into the materials of choice, helps stimulate thoughts and conversation that educate an audience and address concerns about waste culture.

Plate 5 Completed Form Pre-Surface Treatment

After everything is pieced together, the surface treatment of the sculpture occurs. The surface treatment gave the sculpture its final appearance and made the original products that were used to create the work almost unrecognizable. There were a variety of techniques used to disguise the materials within the sculptures that allow for playful cat-and-mouse like reactions. There is a sense of deception about the materials used once the work is complete. Many people would ask about the authenticity of materials used, due to the drastic surface decoration paired with the new mechanical look of the objects that make up the sculptures. This response is typical in the artistic technique of Trompe-l'œil, a French term that means to fool the eye. Trompe-l'œil in PREMIUM Garbage is paired with theatre set design techniques to falsify what the actual object is. The disguising of materials is also a widespread practice in miniature model making, dioramas, and some assemblage art practices all of which helped inspire the process of creating PREMIUM Garbage.

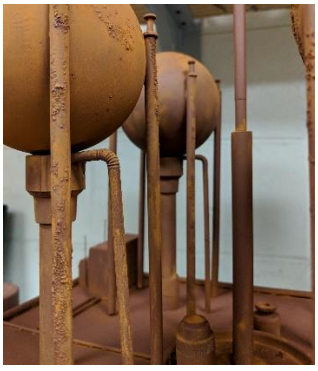

Plate 6 Surface Treatment

Assemblage Art

Assemblage is an artistic practice, form, or medium usually created on a defined substrate that consists of three-dimensional elements projecting out of or from the substrate. It is like collage, a two-dimensional medium. It is part of the visual art, and typically uses found objects but is not limited to these materials. The art forms modern origin dates to Pablo Picasso, a Cubist constructionist circa 1912-1914. The conception of the term, in its artistic sense, can be traced back to the early 1950s, when Jean Dubuffet created a series of collages of butterfly wings which he titled *assemblages d'empreintes.*

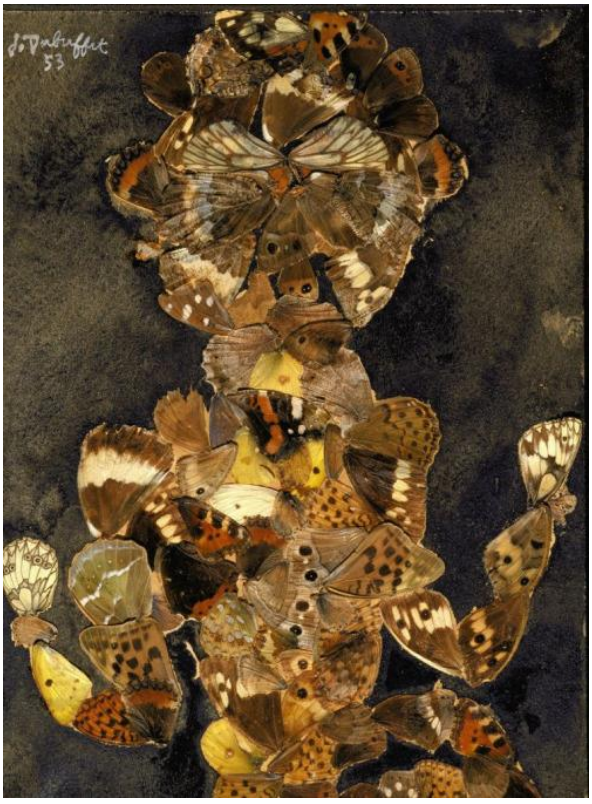

Plate 7 Jean Dubuffet Butterfly Wing Figure 1953
https://www.flickr.com/photos/32357038@N08/3237879872

The artistic practice of assemblage allows for artists to have control over prefabricated objects. This gave artists the freedom to use ordinary objects, remove the objects from their known context, add the objects to a substrate, and give the now combined art a new meaning within the conceptual realm. Assemblage art is inspired by a variety of artistic movements like folk art, upcycling/recycling,

installation art. Sculpture is comprehensive, but Assemblage art gives the practice even more freedom regarding the conceptualization process and material resources without having to fabricate every individual piece needed by hand.

Within PREMIUM Garbage, Assemblage art became the preferred method of gathering resources and applying the found objects, in this case garbage, together to create works of art that speak about the Anthropocene and the production of waste culture. For example, the Horton Spheres used in Midnight Dumping of the Panoche Water District and Horton Spheres, the Horton Spheres hold petroleum products and other chemicals that are used to make shatterproof Christmas ornaments. The spheres themselves are composed of the Christmas ornaments, straws, and PVC pipe that are assembled, all of which are created by chemicals stored within the Horton Spheres. The conceptual freedom that Assemblage art carries allows for the production associations of the materials used and the objects they reference.

Model Making and Miniatures

Model making is known to be a hobby that involves creating models from materials and components acquired by the builder or from kits. The kits contain a variety of pieces that require the maker to assemble in order to make a final predetermined design. Most model building categories like ships, trains, buildings, and scenery have a range of common scales that make them manageable for the average person both to complete and display. A model is generally considered physical representation of an object and maintains accurate relationships between all its aspects. Today, model making is no longer exclusively a hobbyist pursuit.

A scale model is typically a physical representation of an object, which maintains an accurate relationship between all detailed aspects of the model, although absolute values of the original properties need not be preserved. Not using the original properties enables the miniature to demonstrate similar behaviors of the original object without examining the physical object itself and allows the object to be purely aesthetic and non-functional. The most familiar scale models represent the actual appearance of an object in miniature as best as possible, but there are many other kinds of models that exist.

Plate 8 Model Train Maker Jack Rickett
https://www.nptelegraph.com/news/local_news/sutherland-man-carrying-on-tradition/article_add4ef4e-6c61-11e8-99e5-bf5fbd411691.html

Scale models are used in a variety of fields including salesmanship, architecture, film making, military command, engineering as well as hobby model making and artistic practice. While each of these fields may use a scale model for a variety of purposes, all scale models are based on the same methodology and must meet similar guidelines to be functional. Detail requirements may vary depending on the needs of the modeler or artist.

Plate 9 Close up of After Puente Hill's (Waste Management) Flocking technique

To adhere to the traditional scale model motif, relevant aspects within the model must be accurately built, such as material properties, so the model's interaction with the audience is reliably

related to the original object's presence in the real world. Within PREMIUM Garbage, modeling techniques are used on many of the sculptures. Both *Crack, tsssst, sip, ahhhh, Natural Lite, from The Grid* and *After Puente Hills (Waste Management)* use a flocking technique that gives the appearance of grass, moss and other terrain. Flocking is the process of depositing small fiber particles, called flock, onto a desired surface. Flocking may also refer to the texture produced by the process or to any material used primarily for its flocked surface. Flocking of an object can be performed to increase its value in terms of the tactile sensation, aesthetics, color, and appearance. It is also performed for practical reasons including insulation, slip-or-grip friction, and low reflectivity.

Plate 10 Flocking Grass Example
https://www.arttoart.net/scale-model-grass-fine-turf

Flocking is just one of many techniques used to make the sculptures. Some of the work has a coat of iron oxide on the exterior surface, creating a rusty decay effect, while others are manipulated through paint, sculpting, and adhering other natural materials. Many of these processes are like flocking, but instead can be applied using a small paint brush or liberally applied by hand to create new surface textures and motifs. Model making techniques became very important to the conceptual nature of the work, where the sculptures are an easily accessible object that allows audience members to attain the significance of

scale when it comes to our waste production problem. Within PREMIUM Garbage, the miniatures use the intimate scale in juxtaposition with the assemblage art practice to reference small factories and industrial products. This aesthetic became a hybrid of the separate artistic fields to reiterate the significance of the industrial human and the anthropogenic practices.

Affect and Effect of Others

Over the course of my artistic education, my practice has been influenced by hundreds of artists and different directions regarding the process, style, and subject matter throughout the process. Regarding PREMIUM Garbage, artists using similar methods of Assemblage art, miniatures, model making and dioramas have influenced the body of work. Their styles and messages conveyed shared similar characteristics that PREMIUM Garbage desired. These artists include Kris Kuksi, Lori Nix and Kathleen Gerber, Vik Muniz, and Edward Burtynsky.

Plate 11 Kris Kuksi "Church tank Type 1"
https://mymodernmet.com/kris-kuksi-church-tank/

Kris Kuksi played a significant role in the creation of PREMIUM Garbage. Kuksi's work often is associated with the Baroque and Rococo periods, where his stories, color pallet, and imagery often reference themes within the movements. He has described how he feels a greater sense of belonging to the

'Old World'; his artwork is very much a reaction to "the corrupt and demoralized fall of modern-day society – a place where new beginnings, new wars, new philosophies, and new endings exist."[x]

Kuksi reshapes and modifies old objects, small toys, mechanical components, and other materials refashioning them into works of art that have little resemblance to the original appearance. This is a standard style of sculptural Trompe-l' œill and a look that inspired PREMIUM Garbage. A wide range of materials is utilized in his work, like model parts, wood, toys, found object, and metal. The artist describes his sculptures as 'mixed media' that are melded by "a flowing composition and visual balance."[xi] Kuksi's work often combines images in disconcerting ways, such as *"Church tank Type 1"* which merges images of religion and warfare.[xii] Kuksi uses muted color pallet. The neutral tones mixed with extreme quantities of objects compiled together, hides some of the details that seduced the viewer into his work and find small moments which create a narrative. Through a similar fashion, my work creates a deceptive effect between the newly disguised material and the surface treatment that is applied. Conceptually Kuksi's work and PREMIUM Garbage align to tell the stories of humanity, particularly within corruption and the follies of modern-day societies. Kuksi uses the Baroque and Rococo iconography to relate tales of mythology to contemporary societal problems, while PREMUIM Garbage addresses similar problems in the form of industrial revolution-like factories and contemporary issues involving the Anthropocene.

Plate 12 Lori Nix and Kathleen Gerber "Laundromat at Night" 2008
http://www.lorinix.net/the-city/kereuwanieq5fv6bs323b3ia9hp86r

Lori Nix and Kathleen Gerber are collaborative artists who have created dioramas and miniatures for over sixteen years; their sculptural work has primarily been the subject matter for their fine art photography. Their images of faux landscapes and gritty urban interiors address their interests within the Anthropocene and post-humanity reclamation.

For the last decade, Nix and Gerber have found inspiration in their urban surroundings, imagining a future mysteriously devoid of humanity. Their miniature landscapes and interiors reflect a love of science fiction and dystopian entertainment, including movies like *Logan's Run, Planet of the Apes* and *Blade Runner*, an appreciation for architecture, and a passion for the Sublime painters of the Hudson River School.

Plate 13 Lori Nix and Kathleen Gerber "Livingroom" 2013
http://www.lorinix.net/the-city/kereuwanieq5fv6bs323b3ia9hp86r

The series *The City* (2005-2013) features a variety of architectural interiors that could be found in urban surroundings. This series is very different from their early work, where they were grounded in personal experience. This series is more speculation. The public spaces depicted lie neglected and deteriorating, while nature slowly takes over and reclaims them. Though the reason for the decay is unclear the effect is blatant.

Nix and Gerber came to East Carolina University as visiting artists in Spring of 2018. I was fortunate enough to sit down with both artists during a studio visit and receive personal insight about

PREMIUM Garbage. I learned different techniques on how to manipulate the materials I was using. Their encouragement and suggestions towards embracing the limitations of the trash helped guide the work into a more cohesive body. Conceptually, the artists and I both saw the importance of doing work about the Anthropocene. Nix and Gerber are activists towards climate change, and it is reflected in their work mainly through their dioramas in the series *The City*, which is where PREMIUM Garbage's solution towards the Anthropocene and human signature can be found.

Plate 14 Vik Muniz The Gipsy (Magna)
http://vikmuniz.net/gallery/garbage

Vik Muniz is a sculptor and photographer who works with unconventional materials, including tomato sauce, diamonds, magazine clippings, chocolate syrup, dust, dirt, and many more. Muniz creates works of art typically in a sculptural relief form and then photographs the form. Muniz made a body of work entitled *Pictures of Garbage* that profiled in the 2010 documentary film *Waste Land*. The film chronicles Muniz, as he travels to the world's largest landfill, Jardim Gramacho outside Rio de Janeiro Brazil, to collaborate with *catadores* (waste pickers) to gather recyclable materials. Muniz eventually transforms their images into classical portraits, which he models in his studio with their help, using garbage they have scavenged from Gramacho.

Waste Land was an important influence on PREMIUM Garbage. Muniz's work in the film stimulated the social aspect of the work before the work existed in thought and tactility. Muniz shares a joint solution with PREMIUM Garbage, rather than blaming the workers who produce the garbage or the trash for existing in locations like landfills or waterways, both represent the problem in a resourceful artistic manner. PREMIUM Garbage addresses the issues with the production of pollution but instead targets the capitalistic human being the main culprit. Muniz looks to the resourcefulness of the *catadores* and the economy that is sustained, stimulated by their labor.

Plate 15 Edward Burtynsky "Oil Bunkering #4, Niger Delta" 2016
https://www.flowersgallery.com/artists/works/view/67459-oil-bunkering-4-niger-delta

Edward Burtynsky is a photographer who has been investigating human-altered landscapes in his artistic practice for 35 years. Because much of humanity's post-industrial impact is not entirely perceptible to the naked eye, Burtynsky offers another perspective which makes these realities perfectly clear. The Human Signature is depicted in sharp, visually compelling detail. The viewer has the chance to experience places and practices every individual is indirectly connected to or responsible for but does not usually see.

The Human Signature is an example of Burtynsky presenting disturbing images of altered landscapes into our consciousness in the descriptive visible vocabulary that he has developed through documentation of the anthropogenic moment. He brings an aesthetic quality to even the bleakest scenarios while resisting polemic; "I am bringing these places without passing judgment that allows us to consider them and contemplate them and maybe even digest them as ours and not to reject them. We should not reject the wasteland because they are as much a social landscape as our cities. However, we cannot have our lives and our cities without creating this kind of wastelands."[xiii]

Burtynsky is using the lens to depict the Anthropocene. Though both PREMIUM Garbage and *The Human Signature* share common themes of beauty in destruction and industrial pollution, they are separated by the desire of PREMIUM Garbage to address the pollution as a negative and the companies are to blame for the chaos that has ensued amongst the ecosystem.

PREMIUM Garbage

After Dupont, Cargill Inc., and Tyson

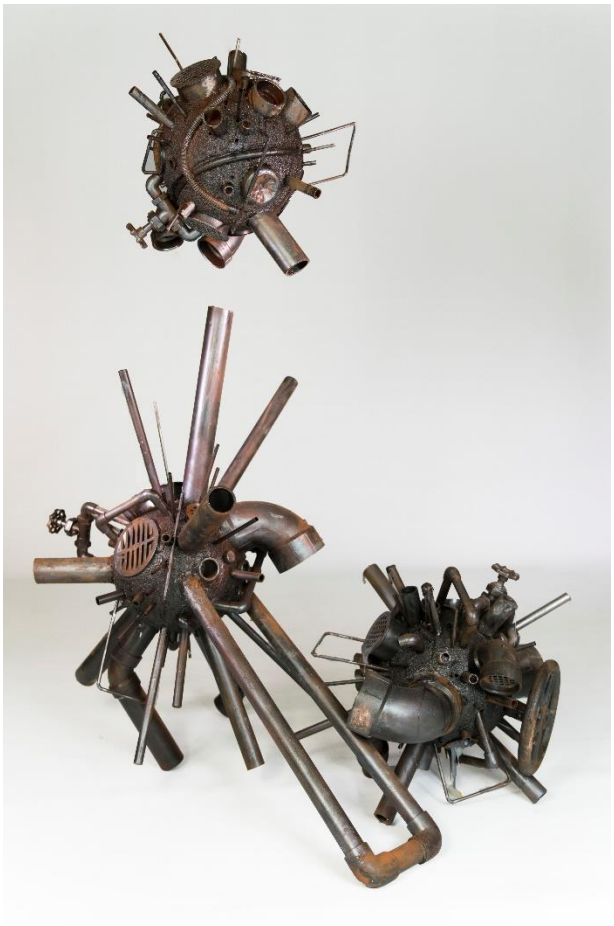

Plate 16 "After Dupont, Cargill Inc., and Tyson" 2018-2019
PVC Pipe, Styrofoam, Straws, Cast Iron, Resin, Acrylic Paint, Iron Oxide

After Dupont, Cargill Inc., and Tyson is a series of three sculptures, which are planet-like spheres, two are suspended in the air and one rests on the ground. The sculptures are a reference to the permanent damage each of these companies (DuPont, Tyson, and Cargill Inc.) has done to Earth's ecosystem, specifically regarding clean water sources. Using model making techniques, Trompe-l' œil, and an additive assemblage process, the sculptures came into existence as small planetary masses that host the massive wastewater contamination for which each of these companies is responsible. The pipes appear

rusty and heavy as if made of steel or cast iron. These materials can be found in many waterways throughout the world and are frequently found spewing wastewater into rivers, streams, and other clean waterways. Metal pipes have many issues depending on the metal compound. For example, Flint, Michigan has been faced with contaminated water due to ill planning of their municipal and rusty pipelines for years. Instead, these pipes only appear to be metal and are made of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) pipe and other vinyl tubing.

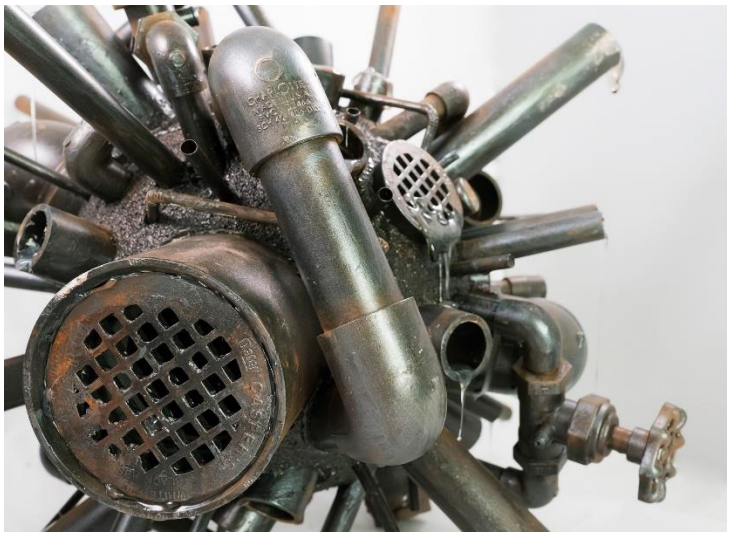

Plate 17 Close up of "After Dupont, Cargill Inc., and Tyson"

PVC is found in a wide variety of products from children's toys to building materials to food packaging. PVC is a very toxic plastic and vinyl chloride, the chemical used to make PVC, has been described as a known carcinogen by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer.[xiv] Because of PVC's high chlorine content, it creates toxic pollution in the form of dioxins, which accumulate in animal fat. PVC can often include exposure to phthalates, a chemical used to soften and increase the flexibility of vinyl and plastics, which may have serious health effects. Health problems aside, there are several severe environmental impacts from producing and the use of the material, like problems disposing of PVC, which is extremely difficult to recycle. Using PVC reinforces the mystery of material manipulation within the model making techniques and Trompe-l' œil. It also acts as a hidden

warning towards the use of PVC. Without knowing the pipes are PVC, there are of signs of distress and erosion of the materials.

Plate 18 Dupont Factory Along the Ohio River
https://variety.com/2018/film/reviews/the-devil-we-know-review-1202751207/

Along the Ohio River, DuPont has provided jobs for thousands of residents. In the 20th century, DuPont is accredited to developing polymers such as nylon, Mylar, Kevlar, and Freon to name a few. One chemical DuPont is heavily associated with is PFOA, commonly known as C-8.[xv] It was a remarkably useful compound which is used in "Teflon" non-stick cookware, stain-resistant fabrics, and even in some food wrappers. [xvi] Over time, researchers from the C-8 Science Panel, a group of scientists based in the Ohio Valley region, have conducted a series of health surveys called the Probable Link reports, show C-8 is extremely toxic. The study linked C-8 to multiple health problems from cancer to reduced immune function.[xvii] A series of additional health studies followed and further proved that chemical compounds like C-8 are dangerous even in small doses. The Science Panel concluded there was a Probable Link to C-8 exposure for those who worked for DuPont and those who used any Teflon related products. Health risks included within the report were the following: diagnosed high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.[xviii] Many articles have been published and a few more are still in the process of publication. This group is specific to the area

where many people have been affected, but the information that was gathered through their research about C-8 health problems has been applied to multiple cases associated with C-8 exposure around the world.

Plate 19 Cargill Inc. Plant in Krefeld, Germany.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cargill_plant_in_Krefeld.jpg

Cargill Inc. is known for trading, purchasing, and distributing agricultural commodities, such as palm oil; trading in energy, steal and transport; the raising of livestock and production of feed; and producing food ingredients like starch and glucose syrup, vegetable oils and fats for application in processed foods and industrial use. Cargill is responsible for multiple violations of the Clean Water Act, broken wastewater pipelines in Australia, building on restorable wetlands, deforestation of the Amazon, dumping sixty-five million gallons of wastewater into Tampa Bay, and forced child labor.

Plate 20 Tyson Foods Factory in Dakota City
https://siouxcityjournal.com/special-section/local/industry/expansion-of-tyson-s-dakota-city-plant-nearing-completion/article_aafea3b1-e24a-5c7e-8272-f3e84f7db2bf.html

Tyson Foods is one of the world's largest meat and poultry producers. Tyson dumps more toxic pollution into the nation's waters than any other agribusiness and produces the most animal manure of five significant companies assessed nationwide.[xix] Agriculture is the probable cause for building more than 145,000 miles of rivers and streams across the United States which are too hazardous for fishing, swimming, drinking or maintaining healthy wildlife, according to the EPA. Tyson and corporate agrobusinesses alike concentrate thousands of animals on factory farms. Based on livestock production data, today's report calculates that Tyson's supply chain alone generates more than fifty-five million tons of manure per year, manure that too often ends up untreated, ultimately fouling rivers, streams, and drinking water.[xx] According to the federal Toxics Release Inventory, Tyson discharged over twenty million pounds of toxic pollutants to the nation's waters in 2014, more by volume than even Exxon Mobil or Dupont.[xxi] The large capitalistic agrobusinesses also create industrial scale pollution with disastrous consequences for many waterways across the country.

Table ES-1. Top 10 Waterways for Total Toxic Discharges

Waterway	Toxic discharges (lb)
Ohio River (IL, IN, KY, OH, PA, WV)	32,111,718
Mississippi River (AR, IA, IL, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, TN, WI)	12,739,749
New River (NC, VA)	12,529,948
Savannah River (GA, SC)	9,624,090
Delaware River (DE, NJ, PA)	6,719,436
Muskingum River (OH)	5,754,118
Missouri River (IA, KS, MO, ND, NE)	4,887,971
Shonka Ditch (NE)	4,614,722
Tricounty Canal (NE)	3,386,162
Rock River (IL, WI)	3,370,39

Figure 4 Table of the Top 10 Waterways for Total Toxic Discharges
https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/04/top-10-polluted-rivers-waterways/

After Midnight Dumping of Panoche Water District, and Horton Spheres

Plate 21"After Midnight Dumping of Panoche Water District, and Horton Spheres" 2019
Recycled Materials, Christmas Ornaments, PVC Pipe, Straws, Cans, Acrylic Paint, Iron Oxide

Midnight dumping refers to any illegal disposal of hazardous materials often during the night but generally meaning when no one is around. *After Midnight Dumping of Panoche Water District, and Horton Spheres* references the illegal dumping of chemicals by the Panoche Water District buried beneath large Horton Spheres, which are used to store large quantities of compressed gas and other petroleum products. The two ideas of this sculpture share a common theme of waste byproduct. While the Horton Spheres hold the chemicals until industries use them stand above ground, the Panoche Water Districts dumping of chemicals illegally sits below the surface, creating a cyclical moment about the production and consequently the improper disposal of hazardous material. The two stories Horton Spheres and the

Panoche Water District are built into a rock-like structure, which acts as a core sample of the earth a tactic used as part of artistic model making. This display method allowed the sculpture to be viewed in the round and group the narratives together. The sculpture is made of Christmas ornaments, straws, packaging materials, PVC Pipe cans, and recycled sculptures. The materials used are congruent to both stories depicted; many of the components require specific chemicals like chlorine and oil to exist. This brings the materials and the concept together to reinforce the continuous moment of production to waste and back to production in the form of artistic representation.

Plate 22 Panoche Water District
https://www.losbanosenterprise.com/news/local/crime/article201457694.html

The Panoche Water District is in western Merced and Fresno counties in California. It is a public agency that facilitates water delivery for irrigation, landowners, municipal and industrial uses. In 2018 five higher ranking members of the Water District - including the district's former general manager - were charged with embezzlement and other allegations in connection with a year-long probe that also turned up evidence towards illegal dumping of toxic waste on the water district's property. The Attorney General's Office worked with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) on the investigation which launched after authorities discovered eighty-six drums of hazardous waste last year buried illegally on the water district's property, officials said. Following the discovery of eighty-six drums of caustic soda, chlorine, iron chloride and mixtures of used solvents, oil and antifreeze, the California DTSC launched an investigation into the district, according to a news release. The liquid waste had leaked into the ground, and the site was being decontaminated, according to the release.[xxii]

After Tank Batteries, and Deepwater Horizon

Plate 23 "After Tank Batteries, and Deepwater Horizon" 2018-2019
Map Gas Bottles, PVC Pipe, Straws, Found Object, Wood, Styrofoam, Tar, Acrylic Paint

After Tank Batteries, and Deepwater Horizon is a hybrid piece combing imagery from tank batteries and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Like many of the other pieces in PREMIUM Garbage, the sculpture plays with the duality of two separate instances of production and pollution. Both objects are artistically represented as a single, stand alone, bright yellow sculpture that indicates a warning of sorts. The problem that the color indicates is defined at the base of the piece oil spills out of the pipes, a reference to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and further connecting the oil rig to the tank batteries. They both extract the toxic fossil fuel from the Earth. The sculpture is drilled into a pedestal much like offshore oil drilling rigs are anchored to the ground and draw up oil from beneath the Earth's crust. A large portion of strata remains as the oil lines run up through it and connect to the tank batteries. The piece is visually top heavy, like oilrigs, giving the viewer a sense of delicate balance, like that which we share with our planet and the fragile ecosystems that were destroyed by oil disasters.

Plate 24 Tank Batteries in Greely, Colorado
https://www.tri-pointllc.com/products-and-services/production-storage-tanks

Littered throughout the Midwest and across the world are large crude oil storage tanks call tank batteries. A tank battery is made up of multiple storage tanks which have crude oil storage capacities up to four days of production.[xxiii] Crude oil is what is left after natural gas is separated from the fluid that is pumped from a well. It can include oil, other petroleum products such as paraffin, and water.[xxiv] Oil batteries may include equipment for measurement for separating inlet streams into oil, gas, and water phases, disposal of the water for cleaning and treating the oil, and conservation of the produced gas.

Plate 25 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
https://www.desmogblog.com/2016/04/20/six-years-after-deepwater-horizon-time-serious-action

The Deepwater Horizon was a semi-submersible, ultra-deep-water, offshore drilling rig owned by B.P. Oil. On April 20, 2010, while drilling at the Macondo Prospect, an uncontrollable blowout caused an explosion on the rig, killing eleven crewmen and ignited a fireball visible from forty miles away. The fire was not extinguishable, due to oil and other particulates that were burning consumed by the flame. Two days later, on April 22, the Horizon sank, leaving the well gushing at the seabed and causing the most devastating oil spill ever in U.S. waters.[xxv] The U.S. government estimated the total discharge at 4.9 million barrels (210 million U.S. gallons).[xxvi] The oil leak was discovered on April 22, 2010, when a massive oil slick spread out from the former rig site. According to satellite images, the spill directly affected 68,000 square miles of the ocean, which is comparable to the size of Oklahoma.[xxvii] B.P. Oil has faced billions of dollars in reprimand for violating the Clean Water Act. The environmental devastation of this horror story can still be felt today.

After Duke Energy 127 Metric Tons of Co_2

Plate 26 "After Duke Energy 127 Metric Tons of Co_2" 2019
Found Object, Christmas Ornaments, PVC Pipe, Straws, Packaging Materials, Wood, Fish Tank, Fog Machine, Acrylic Paint, Iron Oxide

After Duke Energy 127 Metric Tons of Co_2 addresses Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) air pollution released by Duke Energy. The sculpture is made of a variety of found object and recycled materials maintaining the references to the Anthropocene and Human Signature. The materials are packaging products, Christmas ornaments, PVC Pipe, straws, wood, and a large fish tank that conceals a powerplant inside. The powerplant blows smoke from the stacks that protrude out of the top. As the smoke continues to fill the fish tank, the visibility decreases until the viewer can barely distinguish what is inside. However, over time the smoke builds up enough pressure to escape through vent holes on the base of the sculpture releasing the gas into the gallery. Not all problems can be contained, as with many cases in the Anthropocene and the human element continues to affect outside environments.

Plate 27 Close up of "After Duke Energy 127 Metric Tons of Co_2"

The powerplant is connected to a fog machine that rests on a shelf inside of the base. The plant produces smoke (fog) every half hour at two-minute intervals. The smoke slowly evacuates from the fish tank vitrine over the next thirty minutes until the cycle starts up again. Over time, the fog condenses on the inside of the glass fish tank, leaving a residue of glycerin and water vapor, where the visibility becomes even worse.

Plate 28 American Coal Ash Association Logo
https://www.scsengineers.com/event/american-coal-ash-association-2019-winter-meeting/

Duke is a utility member of the American Coal Ash Association, a trade group whose stated mission is "to advance the management and use of coal combustion products in ways that are environmentally responsible, technically sound, commercially competitive, and supportive of a sustainable global community."[xxviii] Approximately sixty-seven percent of Duke Energy's electricity is generated from non-renewable fossil fuels; most of the fossil fuels burned is derived from coal (about sixty-three percent), while thirty-one percent of the company's generation comes from nuclear power, and one and a half percent is generated from hydro. About half a percent of Duke's electricity come from non-hydro renewables.[xxix]

Plate 29 Duke Energy Eden, North Carolina Coal Ash Spill in the Dan River
https://www.wunc.org/post/duke-energy-reverses-will-disclose-coal-ash-disaster-maps

As of 2009, Duke Energy-owned ten of the EPA's forty-four "high hazard potential" coal ash impoundment ponds, toxic dams full of watered-down byproducts from burning coal.[xxx] In North Carolina, thirteen of the coal ash ponds owned by Duke were found to be leaking carcinogens and neurotoxins into the surrounding groundwater, a problem that still exists today. The levels of cadmium, lead, arsenic, and chromium were sometimes found to be more than 380 times greater than state-approved limits.[xxxi] At this same time, Duke Energy had three plants operating within a three-mile proximity of 12,000 people or more, none of which had scrubbers, the filters used by powerplants to filter the air, installed to reduce pollution. The EPA also fined this same plant $1.75 million for violating the Clean Air Act.[xxxii] Coal continue to be a leading source of energy and these issues persist.

Crack, tsssst, sip, ahhhh, Natural Lite, from the Grid

Plate 30 Crack, tsssst, sip, ahhhh, Natural Lite, from the Grid 2018
Found Object, Aluminum Cans, Modeling Turf

A common problem across towns is an excess of litter, particularly with cans, bottles, and the infamous Red Solo Cup. *Crack, tsssst, sip, ahhhh, Natural Lite, from the Grid* was created as a reaction to

this waste problem and is also the piece that started the entire series of work about waste culture. I came to the art building the day after Halloween to work, driving through The Grid, the notorious party district in Greenville, North Carolina, I discovered tragic scenes of localized visual pollution. There were party remnants everywhere, including aluminum beer cans and glass bottles. The litter was not just on The Grid but was also all around the School of Art and Design at East Carolina University. Being sensitive to this type of visual pollution, there was no way I was going to be able to work, turning a blind eye to all the litter. The civil service act of PREMIUM Garbage began at this time. I decided to abandon working in the studio that day to collect trash and recyclables from around the school and the grid as an act of civil service. The collection was not initially intended to become a part of my artistic practice and I planned to dispose of the waste properly, instead of the materials spewed across lawns, streets, and buildings. After collecting many bags of the litter, disposing of food products and non-recyclables, the remaining materials were brought into my studio space to clean and then recycle properly.

Plate 31 Cans from The Grid in Greenville, North Carolina

Many of the beer cans collected were the brand Natural Light, a cheap domestic beer that seems to be preferred around the area that was cleaned up. The brand name inspired the title of the work as well as the site specifics of the problem. At this point, I decided to experiment with the cans and the flocking grass, which is used on other sculptures before PREMIUM Garbage. Spray adhesive is applied to the cans

and the process of flocking the materials with modeling grass occurs. The result is a primitive version of what was on display for the thesis exhibition. The brand name became fitting for the work and inspired the flocking. The concept became a return of the cans to their "natural" state and disguised the mess.

The newly camouflaged cans and bottles address the problems with lack of human attention towards visual pollution. Most people are unable to recognize the problem at hand or ignore the pollution that is around us in a less condensed environment. Every can, bottle, straw or other litter plays a role in the human signature. It is vital to understand that every single piece impacts the environment negatively.

After Puente Hills (Waste Management)

Plate 32 "After Puente Hills (Waste Management)" 2018
Styrofoam, Trash, Wood, Wire, Acrylic Paint, Modeling Turf

After Puente Hills (Waste Management) is an early work during the beginning stages of research surrounding waste and what happens to the Municipal Solid Waste (MSP) that is collected and stored elsewhere. During the early stages of development, *After Puente Hills (Waste Management)* began as a comparison and contrast between a scenic park and a landfill. The sculpture takes the shape of a globe,

tying the piece to the global catastrophe that is waste management, particularly regarding problems surrounding landfills and trash compounds. This is designated to the human signature and the machine in the garden where cohabitation of the garden and machine is impossible as the machine consumes the garden, destroying nature as it grows.

Plate 33 Close up of "After Puente Hills (Waste Management)"

The sculpture's body is made of expanding foam cast into a sphere plaster mold. Once the foam sphere dried, it was removed from the mold and one half was flocked using modeling grass and dirt. The other half was painted with acrylics and later flocked with dirt to give the appearance of a dump. One half remains park-like with trees, shrubs, and children's paintings on a wooden fence that separates the park from the waste. The landfill half has hundreds of trash bags littered across its surface. The bags I created are miniature versions of real trash bags and are comprised of the same material; they are also filled with small trash particles. There are also more familiar objects like tires, telephone poles, and fence pieces fit to scale within the mix of trash that help designate the quantity and scale of the problem.

Puente Hills Landfill closed in 2013, but over the past thirty years, Puente Hills has received nearly 130 million tons of garbage. The book *Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash*, attempts to make that comprehensible: "If Puente Hills were an elephant burial ground, its tonnage would represent about fifteen million deceased pachyderms equivalent to every living elephant on earth, times

twenty."[xxxiii] Puente Hills opened in 1957, and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts has been running it since 1970. The details of its size and operations are mind-blowing: Puente Hills sits on 1,365 acres half of that is buffer zone and wildlife preserve, and the garbage is "roughly the size of New York City's Central Park."[xxxiv] The landfill takes in about one-third of LA County's trash. The landfill is the height of a forty-story building; *Garbology* notes that if the landfill were a building, "it would be among the twenty tallest skyscrapers in Los Angeles, beating out the MGM Tower, Fox Plaza, and Los Angeles City Hall."[xxxv]

Plate 34 Puente Hills Landfill in Los Angeles County, California
https://www.waste360.com/design-and-construction/puente-hills-landfill-california-could-be-transformed-park

Puente Hills was an early adopter in converting the gas to energy and now the Puente Hills Energy Recovery from the gas facility "generates more than forty megawatts of electricity per day from more than 30,000 cubic feet per minute of landfill gas."[xxxvi] The landfill will keep generating gas for another fifteen or twenty years. After the closing of Puente Hills in 2013, the landfill has been given a new face as a public park, with hiking trails, picnic areas, and other outdoor recreational activities, and will continue to produce gas for approximately ten more years. Puente Hills is proof that adaptation and change is possible.

Figure 5 Puente Hills Landfill in Los Angeles County, California
https://www.whittierdailynews.com/2018/04/20/how-to-learn-about-the-new-puente-hills-landfill-park/

Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River

Plate 35 "Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River", 2019
Found Object, Water and Trash from the Tar River

A standard workplace item within businesses around the globe is the watercooler. Within this theme of the human signature, businesses associated with environmental disasters are the first that come to mind and are the businesses and practices addressed within this compilation of pieces. *Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River* includes a watercooler, water jugs, and site-specific water. The watercooler acts as an eco-readymade holding both water and trash gathered from the Tar River in Greenville, North Carolina.

The water dispenser and the water jugs were collected from New Bern, North Carolina, where they would have been thrown away even though they still work. Once the dispenser and jugs were in my possession, I performed the civil service and collected trash along the Tar River. The trash was pressed into the small openings of the water jugs, and after water was collected from the same areas where the garbage was picked up. New labels were placed on the water jugs that described wastewater and water pollution facts that the world is facing.

Plate 36 Close up of "Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River"

The amount of conversation from the public that occurred during this process was astonishing. There were many questions about the water jugs and why I was putting the trash into them. A unique occurrence came from the police who stopped me, asked general questions, and told me to leave and not to pick up the trash or collect water from this area. The police were likely responding out of safety since

the water level was high and the river running a bit faster than usual, but it was still an experience that seemed to restrict the civil service activity in a unique threatening way.

Plate 37 Collecting Trash and Water for "Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River"

Water became a big topic of discussion within PREMIUM Garbage. There are thousands of examples of water pollution and contamination around the world, none of them being unique. Through *Locally Sourced, Small Batch, Unfiltered, Water from the Tar River,* site specifics of Greenville are addressed via the collection process of used materials, while the new labels on the bottles share facts from the EPA about water pollution around the world. These short statements are accompanied by two jugs that share the message "Made in America," a boasted phrase that can be seen on the water jugs labels that were collected from the trash. The message helps redirect the water problems to the United States as a whole, instead of one specific, introducing the problem to a broader audience. This work is easily reproducible and can create conversations about water pollution around the world.

CONCLUSION

There are millions of people working to repair the planet in a plethora of ways. People are cutting down their carbon footprints by; walking, riding bikes or taking public transportation, and using reusable products like water bottles and silicone bags, taking colder showers, using recycled plastic products that have been converted into new products like clothing, decking panels, and other houseware products, picking up trash during trips to the beach or park and supporting businesses that help stimulate regrowth of forests and minimize their non-renewable energy intake. These are all viable mini solutions that encourage healthier lifestyles and allow us to repair some of the damages that have been done to our planet, caused by the industrial human.

These solutions are a start and new trends that pop up every day that encourage individuals to participate in eco-friendly activities and help clean up our planet along the way. A popular trend is a social media craze called #TrashTag, where participants are challenged to go outdoors and find areas that are littered with trash. Then they are supposed to take two photos of the scenery: one in which the garbage is visible in the area that will be cleaned and the other in which they can see the revitalized area after everything was picked up and bagged. The initiative is a refreshingly impactful social media trend that is encouraging people from every demographic to participate in tidying up the planet. Some people participating in the #TrashTag challenge have managed to tidy up roadsides by merely bringing along garbage bags on their day trips; others have boasted the dramatic results of organizing group cleanups. Regardless, the photos are inspiring evidence of how the internet can bring people together for the greater good.

Plate 38 #TrashTag Before and After
https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2019/03/12/trashtag-challenge-goes-viral-as-people-share-beforeafter-photos-of-their-cleanup/#415a596195e8

Every eco-revitalization activity is a small step in the right direction. All activities that include recycling, upcycling, reducing the amount of waste distributed into the environment, and reusing products or supplementing products for reusable alternatives, are slowly helping and becoming a common practice by eco-savvy individuals. Though these activities are rewarding to the individuals performing the tasks, the planet does need a massive solution to combat the ever-growing catastrophe of the Anthropocene. The Federal government has a chance to aid in this battle through government regulation and political change. This is what New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is trying to accomplish with The Green New Deal.

The Green New Deal is a proposed stimulus package that addresses climate change and issues with economic inequality.[xxxvii] The name references the New Deal, a set of economic and social reforms and public work projects proposed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the Great Depression.[xxxviii] The Green New Deal combines Roosevelt's economic approach with modern ideas such as renewable energy and resource efficiency. Like the New Deal, The Green New Deal is facing serious criticism from politicians, scientists, and citizens alike. The goals of the Green New Deal are ambitious, but they can be achieved by cooperation to better the United States and the world. Some of the goals according to bill proposed to Congress are: "Providing all people of the United States with – (i) high-

quality health care; (ii) affordable, safe, and adequate housing; (iii) economic security; and (iv) access to clean water, clean air, healthy and affordable food, and nature", "Providing resources, training, and high-quality education, including higher education, to all people of the United States.", "Meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources", "Repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States, including…by eliminating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as much as technologically feasible" and, "Building or upgrading to energy-efficient, distributed, and 'smart' power grids, and working to ensure affordable access to electricity."[xxxix] Supporters of The Green New Deal hope this plan will stimulate conversation and inform the public like the series PREMIUM Garbage.

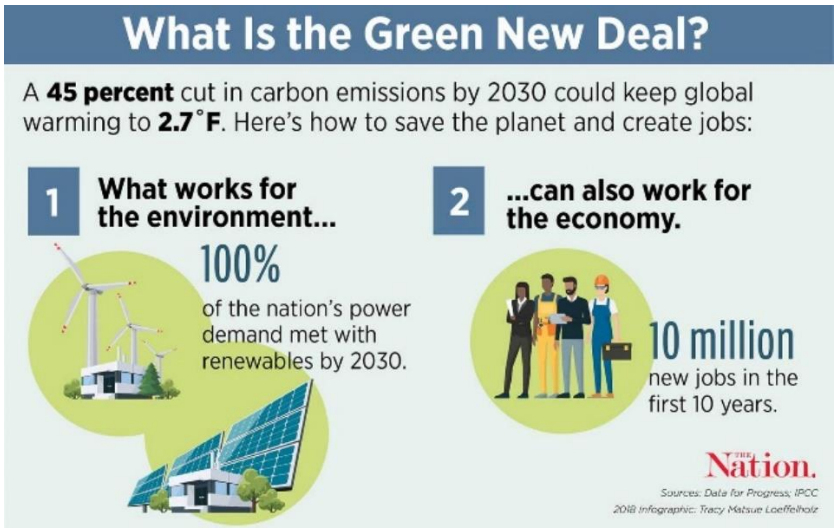

Figure 6 What is the Green New Deal? Chart
https://www.thenation.com/article/democrats-green-new-deal/

PREMIUM Garbage was developed to help educate and inform an audience about the dangers of pollution and production of the polluted items through artistic action. It is the physical and conceptual embodiment of my creative practice, where the action also became the solution to the problem. Creating a body of work changed my habits as well; I have become more aware of the trash around me and the pollution that is created through my daily activities. It has changed my behavior for the better and improved my conscious drive to understand the Anthropocene and the human signature.

The work reflects on the culprits and forces the public to think about the companies and disastrous actions that humans have caused, effectively poisoning the planet and all the inhabitants that call this place home. We cannot keep up the trend of ignoring climate change. We cannot continue to stand by idly and watch our world burn; something needs to be done. Any change of behavior is a small victory, but this is not a one-person job. It will take all of us to fix the damage that has been done and to avoid our planetary extension. Our greatest legacy cannot be our trash.

Plate 39 "PREMIUM Garbage Sign" 2018
Found Object, Garbage, Lighting Components, Wood

WORK CITED

American Coal Ash Association. *About ACAA*. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.acaa-usa.org/about-acaa.aspx

Bellis, M. *How Did Soda Change From a Health Drink to a Health Crisis?* (2018, March 19). Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/introduction-to-soda-pop-1992433

Board, G. *DuPont Offers $670M Settlement For "Teflon" Chemical Contamination Of Water*. (2017, February 13). Retrieved from https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2017/02/13/dupont-offers-670m-settlement-teflon-chemical-contamination-water/

Chaundy, B. *Edward Burtynsky – The Human Signature*. (2018, October 17). Retrieved from https://consideringart.com/2018/10/17/edward-burtynsky-the-human-signature/

Climate Change Is the Product of How Capitalism "Values" Nature [Interview by C. Polychroniou]. (2018, November 18). Retrieved from https://truthout.org/articles/climate-change-is-the-product-of-how-capitalism-values-nature/

Crutzen, P. J. *Geology of mankind. Nature*, 415(6867), 23-23. (2002). doi:10.1038/415023a

D'Alessandro, N. *Why You Should Avoid PVC Products*. (2019, January 31). Retrieved from https://www.ecowatch.com/why-you-should-avoid-pvc-products-1881927242.html

Dam Safety *Assessment of CCW Impoundments Gallagher Generating Station* (Rep.). (2011, April 7). Retrieved https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/web/pdf/duke-gallagher-final.pdf

Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS. (2019, February 13). Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos

EPA History. (2018, May 03). Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/history

Greenpeace. *Duke Energy*. (2019). Retrieved from http://polluterwatch.org/node?page=28

Henry, R. *Scientists up estimate of leaking Gulf oil*. (2010, June 16). Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/id/37717335/#slice-2

Humes, E. *Garbology: Our dirty love affair with trash*. (2013). New York: Avery

Kudler, A. G. *11 Mindblowing Facts About the US's Biggest Active Landfill in Puente Hills (It Has Its Own Microclimate)*. (2013, April 08). Retrieved from https://la.curbed.com/2013/4/8/10256302/11-mindblowing-facts-about-the-uss-biggest-active-landfill-in-puente

Majzoub, M. *REUSE, AMUSE BEMUSE*.+ RAGMAG Motorized Issue, (17), 24-27. (2011, October). doi:https://issuu.com/ragmag/docs/ragmag_oct_2011

Meyer, R. *The Green New Deal Hits Its First Major Snag*. (2019, January 18). Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/01/first-fight-about-democrats-climate-green-new-deal/580543/

Nevers, M. D. *Carbon Monitoring for Action*. (2012, August 23). Retrieved from https://www.cgdev.org/topics/carbon-monitoring-action

Ocasio-Cortez, A. H.Res.109 - *Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal*. (United States, 116 Congress, House of Representatives). (2019, February 7). Retrieved from https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text

On Scene Coordinator Report *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill* (Rep.). (2011, August 31). Retrieved from https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/Attachments/119/DeepwaterHorizonReport -31Aug2011 - CD_2.pdf

Rumpler, J. *Tyson #1 water polluter among agribusinesses*. (Rep.). (2016, June 30). Retrieved from https://environmentamerica.org/news/ame/report-tyson-1-water-polluter-among-agribusinesses

Rumpler, J. *Corporate Agribusiness and the Fouling of America's Waterways* (Rep.). (2016, June). Retrieved from https://environmentamerica.org/sites/environment/files/reports/CorpAgFoulingWaterways2016-web.pdf

Shanker, V. *Ex-Panoche Water District officials charged with misspending thousands in public funds*. (2018, February 22). Retrieved from https://www.losbanosenterprise.com/news/local/crime/article201457694.html

Sieff, K. *The world is drowning in ever-growing mounds of garbage*. (2017, November 21). Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/the-world-is-drowning-in-ever-growing-mounds-of-garbage/2017/11/21/cf22e4bd-17a4-473c-89f8-873d48f968cd_story.html?utm_term=.d1184e74a9fd

Stromberg, J. *What Is the Anthropocene and Are We in It?* (2013, January 01). Retrieved from https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-is-the-anthropocene-and-are-we-in-it-164801414/

The Science Panel Website. (2017, January 4). Retrieved from http://www.c8sciencepanel.org/

Welcome to the Anthropocene. (2019, March 15). Retrieved from https://populationmatters.org/campaigns/anthropocene?gclid=CjwKCAjw2cTmBRAVEiwA8YMgzRaBDVw4Ufl1RJnrLJDDGvidjh6UD4QXF3tG8VMpPrFDnuOPeuQBsRoCPVMQAvD_BwE

What is a Tank Battery? - Definition from Petropedia. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.petropedia.com/definition/3852/tank-battery

Whyte, C. *Green New Deal proposal includes free higher education and fair pay*. (2019, February 12)Retrieved from https://www.newscientist.com/article/2193592-green-new-deal-proposal-includes-free-higher-education-and-fair-pay/

END NOTES

[i] Bellis, M. (2018, March 19). *How Did Soda Change From a Health Drink to a Health Crisis?* Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/introduction-to-soda-pop-1992433

[ii] Sieff, K. (2017, November 21). *The world is drowning in ever-growing mounds of garbage.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/the-world-is-drowning-in-ever-growing-mounds-of-garbage/2017/11/21/cf22e4bd-17a4-473c-89f8-873d48f968cd_story.html?utm_term=.d1184e74a9fd

[iii] EPA History. (2018, May 03). Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/history

[iv] *Climate Change Is the Product of How Capitalism "Values" Nature* [Interview by C. Polychroniou]. (2018, November 18). Retrieved from https://truthout.org/articles/climate-change-is-the-product-of-how-capitalism-values-nature/

[v] Stromberg, J. (2013, January 01). *What Is the Anthropocene and Are We in It?* Retrieved from https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-is-the-anthropocene-and-are-we-in-it-164801414/

[vi] *What Is the Anthropocene and Are We in It?* Smithsonianmag Ibid

[vii] Crutzen, P. J. (2002). *Geology of mankind.* Nature, 415(6867), 23-23. doi:10.1038/415023a

[viii] *Welcome to the Anthropocene.* (2019, March 15). Retrieved from https://populationmatters.org/campaigns/anthropocene?gclid=CjwKCAjw2cTmBRAVEiwA8YMgzRaBDVw4Ufl1RJnrLJDDGvidjh6UD4QXF3tG8VMpPrFDnuOPeuQBsRoCPVMQAvD_BwE

[ix] *Welcome to the Anthropocene.* Ibid

[x] Majzoub, M. (2011, October). *REUSE, AMUSE, BEMUSE*.+ RAGMAG Motorized Issue, (17), 24-27. doi:https://issuu.com/ragmag/docs/ragmag_oct_2011

[xi] *REUSE, AMUSE, BEMUSE* Ibid

[xii] *REUSE, AMUSE, BEMUSE* Ibid

[xiii] Chaundy, B. (2018, October 17). *Edward Burtynsky – The Human Signature*. Retrieved from https://consideringart.com/2018/10/17/edward-burtynsky-the-human-signature/

[xiv] D'Alessandro, N. (2019, January 31). *Why You Should Avoid PVC Products.* Retrieved from https://www.ecowatch.com/why-you-should-avoid-pvc-products-1881927242.html

[xv] *Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS.* (2019, February 13). Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos

[xvi] Board, G. (2017, February 13). *DuPont Offers $670M Settlement For "Teflon" Chemical Contamination Of Water.* Retrieved from https://ohiovalleyresource.org/2017/02/13/dupont-offers-670m-settlement-teflon-chemical-contamination-water/

[xvii]. The Science Panel Website. (2017, January 4). Retrieved from http://www.c8sciencepanel.org/

[xviii] The Science Panel Website Ibid

[xix] Rumpler, J. (2016, June 30*). Report: Tyson #1 water polluter among agribusinesses.* Retrieved from https://environmentamerica.org/news/ame/report-tyson-1-water-polluter-among-agribusinesses

[xx] Rumpler, J. (2016, June). *Corporate Agribusiness and the Fouling of America's Waterways* (Rep.). https://environmentamerica.org/sites/environment/files/reports/CorpAgFoulingWaterways2016-web.pdf

[xxi] *Corporate Agribusiness and the Fouling of America's Waterways* (Rep.) Ibid.

[xxii] Shanker, V. (2018, February 22). *Ex-Panoche Water District officials charged with misspending thousands in public funds.* Retrieved from https://www.losbanosenterprise.com/news/local/crime/article201457694.html

[xxiii] What is a Tank Battery? - Definition from Petropedia. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.petropedia.com/definition/3852/tank-battery

[xxiv] What is a Tank Battery? Ibid

[xxv] On Scene Coordinator Report *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill* (Rep.). (2011, August 31). Retrieved from https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/Attachments/119/DeepwaterHorizonReport -31Aug2011 - CD_2.pdf

[xxvi] Henry, R. (2010, June 16). *Scientists up estimate of leaking Gulf oil*. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/id/37717335/#slice-2

[xxvii] On Scene Coordinator Report *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill* (Rep.) Ibid

[xxviii] American Coal Ash Association. (2017). *About ACAA.* Retrieved from https://www.acaa-usa.org/about-acaa.aspx

[xxix] Nevers, M. D. (2012, August 23). *Carbon Monitoring for Action.* Retrieved from https://www.cgdev.org/topics/carbon-monitoring-action

[xxx] Greenpeace. (2019). *Duke Energy.* Retrieved from http://polluterwatch.org/node?page=28

[xxxi] *Duke Energy* Ibid

[xxxii] *Dam Safety Assessment of CCW Impoundments Gallagher Generating Station* (Rep.). (2011, April 7). Retrieved https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/web/pdf/duke-gallagher-final.pdf

[xxxiii] Humes, E. (2013). *Garbology: Our dirty love affair with trash. New York:* Avery

[xxxiv] Kudler, A. G. (2013, April 08). 1*1 Mindblowing Facts About the US's Biggest Active Landfill in Puente Hills (It Has Its Own Microclimate)*. Retrieved from https://la.curbed.com/2013/4/8/10256302/11-mindblowing-facts-about-the-uss-biggest-active-landfill-in-puente

[xxxv] *Garbology: Our dirty love affair with trash.* Ibid

[xxxvi] *11 Mindblowing Facts about the US'S Biggest Active Landfill in Puente Hills (It Has Its Own Microclimate)* Ibid

[xxxvii] Whyte, C. (2019, February 12). *Green New Deal proposal includes free higher education and fair pay.* Retrieved from https://www.newscientist.com/article/2193592-green-new-deal-proposal-includes-free-higher-education-and-fair-pay/

[xxxviii] Meyer, R. (2019, January 18). *The Green New Deal Hits Its First Major Snag.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/01/first-fight-about-democrats-climate-green-new-deal/580543/

[xxxix] Ocasio-Cortez, A. (2019, February 7). *H.Res.109 - Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal. (United States, 116 Congress, House of Representatives).* Retrieved from https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text